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LIFE AND LETTERS

WE were glad to read in the *Evening Standard* of Tuesday last some very proper observations on the earthquake at Messina. Says our contemporary: "Was it also merely a coincidence that the earthquake followed three days after a blasphemous parody printed in a Radical paper of that city, inviting Heaven to send an earthquake:

> "Tu che sai che non sei ignoto,
> Manda a tutti un tenemoto?

The drunken attack made on a procession of the Bambino may be passed over in contempt, but a vile parody with such an ending scattered throughout the city without restraint comes under a different category." We do not quite follow the *Evening Standard* in the distinction it draws between the act of vile sacrilege it mentions and the writing of the blasphemous parody, one seems to us as horrible as the other; but we are glad to notice that a workaday evening paper is not above confessing to a belief in the possibility of the supernatural even in this enlightened generation of "intellectuals" and "stalwarts."

In reply to our query in last week's ACADEMY: "Where is the word in the English language that ends with *gd?*" we have received the following from Professor Skeat:—

> Scarce—because the sound is scarce; and verbs in *g* are scarce.
>
> But "dog'd" occurs in Shakespeare *twice*.
>
> "We shal be *dog'd* with company."—*Midsummer Night's Dream*, i., 2, 106.
>
> "Are *dog'd* with two strange followers."—*Troilus*, i., 3, 365.
>
> And *twice* we have "dogg'd."
>
> "I have *dogg'd* him."—*Twelfth Night*, iii., 2, 81.
>
> "Will be *dogg'd* with curses."—*Coriolanus*, v., 3, 144.
>
> I think the apostrophe is not really required.
>
> W. W. SKEAT.

We do not think that any impartial judge will be disposed to think that Professor Skeat had made out anything approaching a case. In none of the instances he has produced is there a word ending in *gd*. *G'd* is not the same as *gd;* the apostrophe is put in on purpose to show that the *e* is omitted, and this fact, so far from bolstering up Professor Skeat's plea for "simplified spelling," goes to show that the juxtaposition of the letters "g" and "d" at the end of a word was as unnatural and repugnant to English spelling in the time of Shakespeare as it is now. Professor Skeat remarks that he thinks "the apostrophe is not really required," which is simply begging the question. Meanwhile, we have heard the children crying, Oh, my brothers, and we are seriously thinking, as far as our own family is concerned, of allowing the suffering little ones to spell Professor Skeat's name *Skeet* in future. We trust the Professor will approve.

We are glad to see that our contemporary *Vanity Fair* is shedding, or, at any rate, toning down some of its more violent Socialistic and Anarchical opinions. On the other hand, it has lately broken out into a perfect torrent of rather dubious poetry. This week the editor prints an effusion by a Mr. Aleister Crowley, entitled "After Judgment," which combines the qualities of blasphemy and silliness in a quite remarkable degree. This is how Mr. Crowley addresses the Deity:—

> For this I curse Thee! She was fair
> As day and brighter than the moon,
> And all the gold sung in her hair,
> And all the dawn of May, of June,
>
> Kindled her cheeks; her eyes were blue
> As all Thy skies, as all Thy seas.
> Her mouth—oh, God! her mouth, that slew
> Imagination's ecstasies!
>
> For while I praised the pearl-clear skin,
> The bright lithe body's supple growth,
> By God! I could not even begin
> To say one word about her mouth!

Later on Mr. Crowley lashes himself into the following beautiful exhibition of fine frenzy:—

> With corn and wine; Thou hast made Thee man;
> Thou hast loved and suffered, died and risen;
> But—hath Thy mouth grown white and wan,
> Sucked out into that strange sweet prison?
>
> Nay, Thou hast never kissed the mouth
> Of Dorothy! as I—as I!
> Thou hast never felt its eager growth
> Upon my Lesbian ecstasy.
>
> Therefore I curse Thee not, accurst,
> Who art in that one flower foregone—
> And I, the last, match Thee, the first,
> When that red mouth I fasten on.
>
> Farewell! O God, in endless bliss
> Crowned, with Thine angels singing by;
> I go to hell, with her last kiss
> Yet tingling in my memory.
>
> Nay, start not from Thy throne! I go
> At Thy black damning to the deep.
> Thou canst not follow me! I know
> This thing I had, and this I keep.
>
> God! I have loved! I love! I love!
> And shall love through Thine ageless hell.
> Thou hast the kingdom of the Above,
> And I, her memory. Fare Thee well!
>
> * * * * *
>
> To Thine I am—supreme exclaim,
> The total of all that may be said!
> I answer from the abyss of flame;
> Dorothy! and her mouth was red.

It is quite obvious that if one were to allow oneself to take a serious view of this sort of writing, the only thing to do would be to shout for the police, or even to requisition the aid of the Fire Brigade in an attempt to quench the ardours of Mr. Aleister Crowley's "Lesbian ecstasy." It is perhaps fortunate for Mr. Crowley that his frantic yelpings after the tremendous produce, along with disgust, a certain amount of laughter. It is impossible to take seriously a man who can write such unspeakable balderdash. One thing is certain, nobody but a tom-fool poet would write such stuff, and nobody but a tom-fool editor would print it. We venture to think that Mr. Frank Harris has allowed his editorial judgment to be unduly influenced by the knowledge that Mr. Crowley is an admirer of his novel, "The Bomb," a momentous fact which was revealed to the listening earth some weeks ago in an advertisement of that work which appeared in the most prominent part of the body of Mr. Harris's paper. We have noticed that ever since Mr. Crowley expressed his admiration for "The Bomb," he has been allowed to spread himself all over the pages of *Vanity Fair*, to the obvious detriment of such of the lieges as still continue to read that wonderful journal. This is a pity from Mr. Harris's point of view, as tending to show that the sort of people who admire "The Bomb" are not the kind of persons for whose judgment in literary matters one can entertain respect. "The Bomb," by the way, according to the ever-recurring advertisement which Mr. Harris with characteristic modesty continues week after week to cause to appear among the reading matter right in the middle of his paper, is still in its second edition. We can understand Mr. Harris's pride and joy in the fact, but surely his readers are now sufficiently informed on the point, and might not further announcements be postponed till it has reached a third edition? At present the announcement that, after all the combined roars of approval from Mr. Frank Harris's admirers, "The Bomb" has got no further than the second edition, which it reached at least six weeks ago, cannot be regarded as either exhilarating or important from the point of view of Mr. Harris, whatever effect it may produce on those who do not happen to be enamoured of the great work. Having reached a second edition, *j'y suis, je reste*, seems to be the motto of "The Bomb." We do not repine; quite the contrary.

The January number of the *Quarterly Review* contains a very able and well-reasoned article on the subject of Women's Suffrage by Professor Dicey. Here are his conclusions:—

> Woman suffrage means adult suffrage; and adult suffrage means the transfer of the right to govern the United Kingdom from some 7,000,000 of men to some 20,000,000 or, it may be, 24,000,000 of men and women, whereof women will be the majority.
>
> That the women to be admitted to the parliamentary franchise will often be excellent persons, highly endowed with the virtues of fortitude, personal unselfishness, and self-sacrifice, we are convinced; but the conviction that English women will exhibit in the highest degree the virtues of women is not the contradiction but the complement of the belief, entertained by nearly every man, that women of pre-eminent goodness are often lacking in the virtues, such as active courage, firmness of judgment, self-control, steadiness of conduct, and above all, a certain sense of justice maintained even in the heat of party conflict, which are often to be found in Englishmen, even of an ordinary type. Whoever asks for the vindication of this belief should study the deeds and the words of the fighting suffragists. He should note at the same time that the female leaders in the battle for women's rights have for the most part never unreservedly condemned the lawless follies and the hysterical insolence of their followers. These leaders have thus condoned courses of action which, if pursued by every body of persons who deemed that they suffered real grievances, would reduce the United Kingdom to an anarchy deeper than that which destroyed Poland.

We hope Mrs. Fawcett, Lady Henry Somerset, and Lady Grove, and other "Constitutional Suffragists," will note. Continuing, Professor Dicey says:—

> Of the features which discredit the agitation whose war-cry is "Votes for Women," we have of set purpose said little. The antics of the fighting suffragists hardly deserve serious notice. The misapprehension both of history and of law which suggests the delusion that English women have been robbed of a suffrage which they never possessed, has, we trust, been finally disposed of by the impressive judgment delivered by the Lord Chancellor in the House of Lords. The silly and mendacious insinuation that over 140 women have been sent to prison only for asking for votes is in itself hardly more deserving of confutation.

We make no apology for quoting at such length, and we only regret that space does not permit us to reproduce more of Professor Dicey's brilliant and remorseless exposure of the logical fallacies and absurdities underlying the idiot cry of "Votes for Women." Our hope is that our extracts will send our readers to the article itself, which occupies nearly thirty pages of the *Quarterly Review*.

Mr. Massingham has been lecturing on "The Duties of the Press" at Trinity College, Dublin, with Mr. Birrell, if you please, as chairman. For some reason or other the average "great journalist" would appear to know just as little about journalism as the average great bookseller knows about books. A while ago we had Mr. St. Loe Strachey informing us that the hapenny press had always refrained from attempts to corrupt or debase the public mind. We are now assured by Mr. Massingham that the founders of the new hapenny journalism "have formed in the people a desire for romantic colour and movement." Hence, of course, Miss Charlesworth's red cloak and rapid motor flights. Mr. Massingham is further of opinion that a journalist's business "is not to make life moral, but to make it interesting." Hence, of course, the weekly scramble for the *Nation*. We shall not suggest at this juncture what the particular duties of the Press may be; but it is quite certain that the duty of the journalist is an affair which journalists themselves are a little prone to neglect. The desire to be interesting is, perhaps, just as noble in its way as the desire to be moral. On the other hand, neither of these desires should be allowed, as they are so frequently allowed, to overshadow and even to extirpate the desire to be honest. Of course, we are well aware that in the twentieth century honesty is no virtue, but a sort of old-fashioned vice. Cleverness is a much sounder attribute. But as the universe is founded on the fact that two and two make four the cleverest attempts to turn the four into five are bound to came to grief in the long run.

An American has been expressing his views about England in *Scribner's Magazine*. We reproduce his impression of the English administration of justice:

> You may do as you please unmolested, uncriticised, unreported, unphotographed, unheralded, unnoticed even, as in no other country in the world, but the moment you do what you ought not to please to do, from the policeman to the court, and thence to the jail, is a shorter road here than anywhere else. So much personal liberty is only possible where justice is swift, unprejudiced, impartial, and sure. The lord, the millionaire, the drunkard, and the snatch thief are treated the same—within the same

six months a great financial schemer and the son of a great nobleman were ushered behind the bars with almost as little ceremony, and as little delay, as are required for the trial of a wife-beater or a burglar. Personal freedom has this serious responsibility, its misuse is promptly punished, and there is no escape—they even behead a king on occasion.

Apart from beheading kings, which has been rather out of fashion amongst us for some years past, it is gratifying to find that there are points about England which an American might at a pinch bring himself to admire.

The *Nation's* latest poetry is by Mr. John Galsworthy, who addresses himself to his dog as follows:

My dear, when you leave me
You do not even drop a shoe;
And yet you know a man to be
The sort of dull monstrosity,
Whose spirit cannot follow you
When you're away, with all its heart,
As yours can follow me.

My dear, since we must leave,
One sorry day, I you, you me;
Teach me to grieve as you can grieve;
Then through the ages we'll retrieve
Each others' scent and company,
And longing shall not pull my heart—
As now you pull my sleeve.

Which is more or less edifying as regards outlook and aspiration. On the whole, we think Mr. Galsworthy will be well advised to stick to his tales of wife-beating on the part of persons who do not happen to be male Suffragists.

The January number of the *New Quarterly* contains a rather slipshod set of verses by Mr. Thomas Hardy. Mr. Hardy calls his "poem" "The House of Hospitalities," and proceeds to rhyme "barrel" with "carol," and "viol" with "dial," and to assure us that:

Now no Christmas brings in neighbours,
And the New Year comes unlit;
Where we sang the mole now labours,
And spiders knit.

We were always under the impression that knitting was an old woman's affair: and if spiders really do knit, we may take it that Adam span while Eve did the delving. But Mr. Hardy is a good deal more of a poet than he appears to be, and we must give him his head. In the same journal we find a little gentle, humorous blank verse by Dr. Verrall, who sets out to prove, after the manner of Aristophanes that Tennyson:

Was uninventive, dull, a mere machine,

and that the "beginnings" of his poems are all capable of being tagged with the line:

Had a bad cold and blew his little nose.

For example:

The last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful spring
Had a bad cold and blew his little nose.

Also:

Leodogran, the King of Cameliard,
Had a bad cold and blew his little nose.

And still worse:

Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine the lily-maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the east,
Had a bad cold and blew her little nose.

Of course, this is the noblest of wit. The angels will sniff and blow their noses over it. And, what is more, Mr. Verrall should run round to the offices of *Punch* at once.

TITHONUS

"So, too, did Dawn of the golden throne carry off Tithonus. Now so long as winsome youth was his, in joy did he dwell with the golden-throned Dawn at the world's end, beside the streams of Oceanus. But when hateful old age had utterly overcome him, and he could not move or lift his limbs, to her this seemed the wisest counsel; she laid him in a chamber and shut the shining doors, and his voice flows on endlessly and no strength is his such once there was in his limbs."

At the world's pillared end by Ocean's stream
Is the Dawn's palace-porch, shot with a gleam
Of flashing water, through and through; a wide
And archèd palace on the unvesselled tide,
High-built upon a terrace, salt with foam,
Greater than any bastioned mountain-dome.
A double light upon the sea and sand
The broad ooze burns before it to the land,
Yet vapour-turbaned are its galleries,
And wet with the reproof of bathing seas;
Lapt in some dream it seemed, severely grave
And resonant as a world-forgotten cave.
Here lay Tithonus, weak as a spent wave,
White as are breasts of ripple-feathered cloud,
And wrinkled as the glossy sands unploughed,
Whom Dawn, that lady, in her chambers hid,
And freshlier than a trickling rainbow slid
Earthward, car-borne; while her white stallion team
Beat into milky light the untravelled stream,
Where their pale breaths were mixed inseparably
Into the wide-spread clamour of the sea.
But a voice flows behind the amber door,
As of a dry husk on the threshing floor
Of earth, or a light-bodied phantom shell
Washed by Time's waters, as they beat and fell
About the sun, and broke in months and days.
'Tis that immortal shadow, that can raise
Such tinkling as the dry cicada beats
From sunburnt thighs, in the meridian heats,
Or as the whimpering dead with voice of reeds.
Waiting not on his youth, no nor the seeds
Planted by that irremeable shore,
But with bent head, as one that stoops for ore,
Seeking the path of ordinance, as is meet,
Beyond the gushing light, for cold thin feet,
Where he might set his burthen to the ground,
And plant it underneath some cairn-heaped mound;
And, pausing, to the humid earth return,
A little light dust in a sealed-up urn.
So in the golden chamber, the voice flows
Unceasing; but the golden doors shut close.

M. JOURDAIN.

THE POETRY OF OSCAR WILDE

THE claims of the late Oscar Wilde to rank with the great English poets are in danger of being overlooked, not because there is any lack of attention bestowed on his works, but because it has become a sort of legend that he was a writer of prose first and a poet only in a secondary sense. There is no doubt that the actual bulk of a poet's work has a great deal to do with the position he takes in the eye of the critical as well as the uncritical. The man who writes very little, and that exquisitely, often has to take a place in the general estimation behind the man who pours out a constant stream of good poetry, the best of which is yet inferior to the best of his rival. On the whole, it is, perhaps, right that this should be so, at any rate, it is natural. The poet's business in life is to write poetry, and if he allows years to go by without breaking his silence in that direction he must not complain if he has to yield place in critical estimation to more assiduous wrestlers with form. On the other hand, it might well be argued that nearly all poets have written too much and destroyed too little. How much of Keats there is (especially in Mr. Buxton Forman's deplorable edition) that we could not only dispense with, but could wish to believe that Keats had never written; how much of Wordsworth, how much of Shelley! A great deal of this superabundance is due, of course, to the scandalous custom which has grown up among biographers and editors of dead men of genius of hunting up every kind of unconsidered trifle which can be brought home to their author and printing it under his name without the smallest regard for what would be his feelings. We can imagine the annoyance, not to say the rage, of Keats if he were to return to this life and pick up the aforesaid Buxton Forman edition. It would probably kill him again. So that between the sin of writing too little and the sin of writing too much it is hard to hold the scales evenly, and we shall not attempt to do it here, at any rate on this occasion. These reflections have been called forth chiefly by the unexpected bulk of the volume of Wilde's collected poetry which we have before us in a beautiful, though pirated, edition, published by Mr. Mosher. We do not, of course, approve of pirated editions, but the collected edition of Wilde's works, published by Messrs. Methuen, is, as we have already had occasion to explain, marred by the non-inclusion of "The Picture of Dorian Gray," and this insolent and idiotic impertinence on the part of a trading establishment to the memory of a great writer, in our opinion warrants any amount of piracy on the part of those who have sufficient respect for that writer's written words to refrain from imprudent attempts at censorship. The fact that the omission to include in their edition that great book, with its august and terrible moral lesson, was due to the interference of Mr. T. H. Warren, President of Magdalen College, Oxford, is no excuse for Messrs. Methuen. It is part of the business of a competent publisher to have, at any rate, some faint inkling of the value of contemporary criticism, and if they did not happen to know that Mr. Warren was very ill-qualified as a literary critic Messrs. Methuen could easily have found it out if they had taken the trouble to enquire from those who were in a position to inform them. That they did not do this, and that, consequently, they failed to include "The Picture of Dorian Gray" in their edition, destroys the value of that edition and produces, moreover, a feeling of resentment against them in all true lovers of letters which can best be expressed by refraining from buying that edition. This is what we have done and what we advise others to do. As far as being victims of pirating goes, we are in the same boat as Messrs. Methuen, for Mr. Mosher has appropriated one of our sonnets published in THE ACADEMY and used it on the first page of the volume without so much as a "by your leave." We forgive him on account of the print, paper, binding, and general "get up" of this beautiful book.

We think that most people will be surprised to find what a lot of poetry Wilde wrote. Although we have been familiar with every line of it for years, we were ourselves astonished to see how large a book it makes, and if there is some of it which we could spare, is not that, as we have already said, the case with every poet? Anyhow, the fact is established that Wilde wrote enough actual stuff in poetry to satisfy the exigencies of those who refuse to grant the high places in poetry to poets whose output is slight. The question arises, Is the quality of the poetry really great? We believe that it is. That is to say, we believe that poets must be judged by their best work, and we believe that the best poetry of Wilde is equal to the best that has been produced. It is not much use arguing about these matters, the best way is to quote. Here are eight stanzas from "The Harlot's House":

> Like strange mechanical grotesques,
> Making fantastic arabesques,
> The shadows raced across the blind.
>
> We watched the ghostly dancers spin
> To sound of horn and violin,
> Like black elves wheeling in the wind.
>
> Like wire-pulled automatons,
> Slim silhouetted skeletons
> Went sidling through the slow quadrille.
>
> They took each other by the hand,
> And danced a stately saraband;
> Their laughter echoed thin and shrill.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> Then turning to my love, I said,
> "The dead are dancing with the dead,
> The dust is whirling with the dust."
>
> But she—she heard the violin,
> And left my side and entered in:
> Love passed into the house of lust.
>
> Then suddenly the tune went false,
> The dancers wearied of the waltz,
> The shadows ceased to wheel and whirl.
>
> And down the long and silent street,
> The dawn, with silver-sandalled feet,
> Crept like a frightened girl.

Who that has any love or feeling for poetry can read these moving and wonderful lines without knowing that they are the highest poetry?

Wilde in his early days came very much under the influence of the work of Rossetti and William Morris, and their influence was not favourable to his genius. Such poems as the "Ballade de Marguerite" and the "Dole of the King's Daughter" in their studied artificiality read almost like parodies, and have no value as serious verse; but whenever he was possessed by real emotion he wrote beautiful poetry. He had a complete mastery of the technique of his art, and in this respect he may be taken by the student as an almost impeccable model. He knew so well how to do the thing that we constantly find him turning out what are merely exercises. A great deal of this work he would probably have destroyed or gladly seen forgotten, but the moment Life touched him he rose to the occasion. His extraordinary "Ballad of Reading Gaol" was beaten out of him by sheer agony of mind, and the extent to which, in that masterpiece, he took the wind out of the sails of the late W. E. Henley can

be gauged by the mean and envious ill-nature of Henley's signed review of the poem. It was exactly the kind of thing Henley had been trying all his life to write and had always just failed to bring off. Henley was very nearly a great poet, but between his attempts at emotional realism and great poetry there was always a gulf fixed. Wilde, in the "Ballad of Reading Gaol," swung over the gulf in his stride, so to speak, while Henley, in his "Hospital Lyrics" and elsewhere eternally boggled on the take-off side. Finally, we have "The Sphinx," which is perhaps Wilde's most complete and satisfactory poetical work, for here he was hampered neither by the insincerity which sacrifices everything to style on the one hand, nor, on the other hand, by the crude brutality of real and horrible life breaking like a violent unresolved discord into the harmony of his delicate yet stately music. We quote three superb stanzas:

> Wild ass or trotting jackal comes and couches in the moulder-
> ing gates.
> Wild satyrs call unto their mates across the fallen, fluted
> drums.
>
> And on the summit of the pile the blue-faced ape of Horus sits
> And gibbers while the fig-tree splits the pillars of the peristyle.
>
> The god is scattered here and there: deep-hidden in the windy
> sand,
> I saw his giant granite hand still clenched in impotent despair.

Here, incidentally, one may note the tremendous effect produced by printing as two-lined stanzas what are in effect four-lined stanzas, written in the metre of "In Memoriam." Oscar Wilde was for ever proclaiming that the voice and not the eye was the test of poetry, yet he was not above using this device, and its success is a proof that in a printed poem (*pace* Professor Skeat) the eye cannot in our day be left out of account.

If Wilde had written only the poems we have named he would have established his claim to rank among the great English poets, and we doubt whether, apart from two or three sonnets, he wrote any others which would strengthen this claim, though he wrote nothing which might seriously invalidate it. Too often he wrote without inspiration and without genuine emotion, but at his worst he was always an accomplished master of his craft, and at his best he was a great poet whose immortality is assured as long as the English language exists.

TENNYSON, POE AND SHAW

MR. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW would appear to be arriving at somewhat hasty conclusions with respect to Mr. George Bernard Shaw. As we pointed out in these columns last week a certain friend and humble admirer of his has taken the trouble to place him upon "a recognised and unassailable critical throne." We have most of us heard of the imaginary lion which runs round the world. Mr. Shaw's recognised and unassailable critical throne is just as illusory, and even a great deal less true to the imagination. But Mr. Shaw is pleased with "recognised" and delighted with "unassailable," and he has lost no time in sitting down upon thin air, as it were. To his hand, of course, "ready, aye, ready," and willing as Barkis, there are journals—the penny Socialist weekly, and the *Nation*, which is a mere Radical print at sixpence. In the penny Socialist weekly Mr. Shaw has been accustomed to toy tenderly with his aforesaid humble admirer. For his high critical fulminations, however, he prefers the *Nation*, probably because it is sixpence, and therefore fivepence "heavier," and fivepence more "influential" than its vapid penny contemporary. We do not know, of course, but we wonder if some time last week Mr. Shaw wrote to Mr. Massingham as follows:

> My dear Massingham,—As you will gather from the *Illustrated London News* I now occupy a recognised and unassailable critical throne. Poe is about just now. Might I put the comether over him for you at the usual rates. Of course, Orage will be glad for me to do it; but—well, there you are.
>
> Thine,
> G. B. S.

To which Mr. Massingham may conceivably have replied:

> *Mon cher Confrère,*—Certainly. Make it two pages, and be quite sure I have the copy by Wednesday morning *without fail, please.*
>
> Yourn,
> W. H. M.

In any case, under the head of "Life and Letters"—which we seem, by the way, to recognise—there duly appeared in the *Nation* of Saturday an article nobly entitled "Edgar Allan Poe," and modestly signed "G. B. S." We cannot suppose for a moment that when Mr. Massingham commissioned or agreed to accept Mr. Shaw's panegyric, he expected to get his money's worth in the shape of criticism, explication, or appraisement of Edgar Allan Poe's poetry. Nowhere in his three columns and a half does Mr. Shaw say a word as to the only point which should really concern your recognised unassailable critic—namely, Poe's poetry. The reasons for this omission are not far to seek, and we may set them down simply to want of capacity. It is impossible for Mr. Shaw, or any other person of his peculiar temperament, to have any opinion of poetry at all. The sixth sense of the Socialist is not for poetry, but for property. Socialism and poetry, like Socialism and religion, may be counted plain contradictory terms. Of course, the Socialists will deny this, but we know. They possess no poet or critic of poetry at the present moment; they never have possessed a poet or a critic of poetry, and they never will possess a poet or a critic of poetry. And if they cry "Shelley," as they are wont to do when it suits them, we have plenty of good answers for them. Meanwhile we must take the recognised and unassailable criticism of Shaw. This is how Mr. Shaw commences operations on Edgar Allan Poe:

> There was a time when America, the Land of the Free, and the birthplace of Washington, seemed a natural fatherland for Edgar Allan Poe. Nowadays the thing has become inconceivable; no young man can read Poe's works without asking incredulously what the devil he is doing in *that* galley. America has been found out, and Poe has not—that is the situation. But did he live there, this finest of fine artists, this born aristocrat of letters? Alas! he did not live there; he died there, and was duly explained away as a drunkard and a failure, though it remains an open question whether he really drank as much in his whole lifetime as a modern successful American drinks, without comment, in six months.

We are informed, too, that "if the Judgment Day were fixed for the centenary of Poe's birth, there are among the dead only two men born since the Declaration of Independence whose plea for mercy could avert a prompt sentence of damnation on the entire [American] nation; and it is extremely doubtful whether these two could be persuaded to pervert eternal justice by uttering it. The two are, of course, Poe and Whitman." Mr. Shaw's unassailable critical position will be obvious. After his headline "Edgar Allan Poe," he prints a pretty little asterisk, referring the reader to the bottom of the column, where we read "Copyright U.S. America, 1909." Mr. Shaw knows full well what made him write the passages we have quoted. Plainly, his motive cannot have been a literary

motive; neither can it have been a philosophical motive nor a sociological motive. The American people are a newspaper-fed people, and they pant after the sensation, even as Texas is understood to have panted for Taft. Mr. Shaw remembers dimly that his own "stupid" and "ill-bred" criticisms of Shakespeare have made considerable noise in America, and that his fame in that delightful country rests mainly upon them. His plays no doubt have scored in New York and, for anything we know to the contrary, in Ratville, Mo. But it is as the "Guy who hoodooed Shakespeare" that Mr. Shaw is dear to the cultivated, enlightened, democratic, ring-tailed American. And persiflage about Shakespeare being nowadays rather "played out," Mr. Shaw hazarded his remarks about Poe and the common American's capacity for strong drink, not to mention the Day of Judgment and a sentence of damnation upon the entire nation, purely with a view to the inevitable advertisement. Even as we write Mr. Shaw's American *confrères* will be at it. We can see all the half-columns of headlines exactly as Mr. Shaw can see them:

SHAW SHOUTS A PÆAN
FOR POE,
BUT HE SAYS THAT
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DRINK
MORE THAN POE DRANK,
AND THAT
THEY ARE ALL DAMNED.

The American people may not relish Mr. Shaw's view of them, but every man jack of them will hear of it, and the great name of Shaw will be once more "wafted on the tongues of men from Coney Island to the Golden Gate, and from Nebraska to the southernmost Philippines." And this, of course, is exactly what Mr. Shaw requires. If he had wished to praise Poe, we will do him the credit to believe that he could have praised him in some sort of passable literary way; if he had wished to condemn the Americans he would have done it in a pamphlet, or more probably in a play. But Mr. Shaw is palpably striving after neither of these desirable businesses, his single idea being that the time has once more arrived when Shaw must be talked about in America. Of course, if we are wrong, and Mr. Shaw really believes that his article on Edgar Allan Poe is a serious contribution to criticism, we can only say that he has succeeded in proving at the end of his own pen that he is the very worst critic in the world. Still further to rouse, inflame, egg on, provoke, capture, and otherwise compass the persons upon whom good advertising depends, Mr. Shaw pretends to make comparison between Tennyson and Poe. "Tennyson," he says, "never produced a success that will bear reading after Poe's failures. Poe constantly and inevitably produced magic where his greatest contemporaries produced only beauty. Tennyson's popular pieces, 'The May Queen' and 'The Charge of the Six Hundred' *(sic)* cannot stand hackneying; they become positively nauseous after a time. 'The Raven,' 'The Bells,' and 'Annabel Lee' are as fascinating at the thousandth repetition as at the first."

For our own part, if we were asked to choose between the two evils, we should prefer to hear for the thousandth time:

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volleyed and thundered,

than to hear even for the tenth time the "tintinabulation of the bells, bells, bells, bells, bells, bells, bells, bells, bells, bells, bells, bells, bells, bells, bells, bells," and so on. Besides which nobody but a *gauche* and indiscriminate judge would compare "The Raven" with the "May Queen," or "The Bells" with "The Charge of the Light Brigade," or "Annabel Lee" with either of them. And nobody but a critic like Mr. Shaw would forget that practically all of Poe that is worth remembering is popular in a slightly vulgar sense, whereas Tennyson has always been "popular" in the literary and proper sense. As for Tennyson never having "produced a success that will bear reading after Poe's failures," we are not acquainted with the precise bearing of the blessed substantive "success" as applied to a poem, but if Mr. Shaw means that Poe's less distinguished lyrics are better poetry than, say, "The Lady of Shalott" (or to bring the argument within range of Mr. Shaw's poetical outlook, better than "The Brook"), we shall take leave to assure him that he is most seriously in error—so seriously, in fact, that he should either withdraw the statement or nevermore hazard an opinion about poetry. Mr. Shaw will recognise that "nevermore" is the Raven's word. It is a good word, though really not very poetical, and it does not rhyme with Shaw as the Socialist versifiers appear to imagine. For the rest, we are astonished that Mr. Massingham should allow Mr. Shaw to imitate the critical methods of Mr. Chesterton in the columns of the *Nation*. We have heard of men digging their graves with their teeth, but Mr. Shaw appears to have set to work in earnest to scratch his initials on a coffin-plate with his aforesaid "pen." And as for recognised and unassailable critical thrones, we do not recognise Mr. Shaw's affair; though dealing as we are with an Irishman, we have ventured to assail it.

THE "STAR" COMES OF AGE.

THE *Star* newspaper was twenty-one years of age on Monday. We suppose that this is matter for congratulation to the *Star*, particularly as there may have been occasions in its infancy, and even in its teens, when it expected to have its bright young career cut short by one or other of the various insidious diseases to which cheap newspapers are susceptible. However, the *Star* has survived, and is out of its nonage, and naturally it felt disposed on Monday to flush out its columns with a species of editorial champagne. Here is a sample of the vintage which our contemporary thought fit to broach or spill:—

> *The Star* was born twenty-one years ago. Its coming-of-age is an event interesting both to itself and to its family circle of readers. A newspaper like *The Star* does not live to itself and for itself. It is a part of its readers, and its readers are a part of it. It has a personality which is partly its own and partly that of the democracy whose aspirations it expounds, whose opinions it expresses, and for whose cause it fights. In a sense, therefore, it is a living soul that comes of age to-day, the soul of a newspaper that lives in the body of its readers. It is a soul with a social conscience and a social aim, and it is by its fidelity to that conscience and that aim that the *Star* desires to be judged to-day, and therefore we celebrate our twenty-first birthday by submitting ourselves to the verdict of our readers. Have we kept the solemn pledges which we gave to them in our first number? Have we been true to the principles then defined and to the ideals then proclaimed? Have we done what we promised then to do? Have we fought the good fight then begun? Have we kept the faith then professed? Is the *Star* to-day in its political spirit and in its moral temper what it was on January 17th, 1888?

The *Star*, of course, answered the whole of these questions in the beautiful affirmative. Over its own loyalty to its own high principles, in fact, it positively shed inebriate tears. "We have been loyal," it cried, "through good report and evil report. . . . loyal in the teeth of reaction and the face of defeat, loyal in the dark days when Radicalism seemed to have foundered in the storm, loyal even when the people themselves were swept away by the sophistries of

recreants and shibboleths of renegades." The tremendous strain which the *Star* would have to suffer when the sophistries of recreants and the shibboleths of renegades were abroad will be obvious. In a sense it is almost too much to require that a newspaper should be loyal to anything or anybody at such times; but the *Star* has remained loyal. Furthermore, it has not been content with mere, sheer, pig-headed, dog-like loyalty. "For the greater part of our life," it says, "we have been engaged in fierce war against the enemies of the people, sometimes resisting the resurrection of old tyrannies; sometimes the establishment of new abuses. The conflict has raged all along the line of our national and municipal life, and at every point the *Star* has been in the forefront of the battle against those who have sought to benefit the privileged few at the expense of the many; the rich at the expense of the poor, the strong at the expense of the weak, and the classes at the expense of the masses." Of course, on a man's twenty-first birthday much may be forgiven him, and if he puts on the figure of the braggart it is charitable to remember that he has had wine. So that we shall make large allowances for the *Star*. At the same time the truth has its uses, and we are not disposed to agree that the *Star* is half such a wonderful, creditable and high-principled journal as it believes itself to be. Particularly do we doubt whether our contemporary has the smallest right to assert that for the greater part of its life it has been engaged in fierce war "against the enemies of the people." In point of fact, the war in which the *Star* has really been engaged from the day of its birth to the present happy anniversary, and the war in which it is still engaged and will always be engaged, is the war for the people's hapence. And what is more, while it has ever shouted its profession of tenderness for the people from all available housetops on all conceivable occasions, it may be reckoned one of the most flagrant and implacable enemies that the people ever encountered, and this because it carries on the warfare for hapence in a manner which can only result in the absolute moral and material undoing of the very masses whom it pretends to benefit. We have more than once pointed out in these columns that the *Star* newspaper, in its earlier editions, at any rate, is a plain, unvarnished betting sheet. The Fourth Edition of Tuesday, for example, contains "To-Day's Finals," with "Selections" for various races at Dunstall. In addition to these selections, which, by the way, are put forward over the name of the redoubtable "Captain Coe," the dear people are offered "A Manchester Double," by a gentleman who calls himself "Starlight," a "Mid-day Final" by another gentleman, who styles himself "Uno," and a list of horses which have the "best chances on form." There is also another list of horses, headed "Naps at a Glance," and a table of "Selections from To-day's Papers"; four to five columns in all. It is on these admirable features that the *Star* practically depends for its morning sale. And there can be no doubt in the world that the persons who buy it are not in the least concerned with either the sophistries of recreants or the shibboleths of renegades, but simply and solely with possible winners and likely odds. And on Tuesday morning "Captain Coe" would appear to have been in a most excellent vein of prophecy, inasmuch as he succeeded in naming six consecutive losers, and never a single winner. For the first race at Dunstall he "selected" Romany Rye. Quite appropriately, "All Going Out" won. For the second race he gave Sir Henry, and Periwinkle II. won. In the third race his selection was Lady Edwardine, a horse which was not even placed; Glen Mazarin for the fourth race ran second; Curby, which "Captain Coe" starred for what is known in "sporting circles" as "a nap bet," ran fourth in the fifth race, and Lord Schomberg fourth in the sixth race. Then "Starlight," with his marvellous Dunstall Double, advised the people whom the *Star* so loves to put their money on Wolfkin and Curby; and the people, of course, lost, inasmuch as neither Wolfkin nor Curby won. "Uno's" Mid-day Final likewise came to grief; not a single winner was mentioned in the "Follow Form" list; and not a single winner was mentioned in the "Naps at a Glance" list. We are in no position to gauge the morning circulation of the *Star* newspaper, but we will suppose that it is a hundred thousand copies, and we will suppose that only half the people who purchased the paper made a bet on the Dunstall racing, and that each of those persons made only a single bet, and risked no more than one shilling in the day. This would mean a clear loss to the working classes of fifty thousand shillings, or two thousand five hundred pounds. And calculating on the same basis, with, say, only three racing days per week in the year, the losses to the public on the advice of the *Star* newspaper may very well amount to three hundred thousand pounds per annum. The which has been going on for twenty-one years! Twenty-one years of "fierce war against the enemies of the people. . . . in the teeth of reaction, and the face of defeat, and in the dark days when Radicalism seemed to have foundered in the storm, and the people themselves were swept away by this sophistry of recreants and shibboleths of renegades." Indeed, coupling these terrible antagonists with the selections of "Captain Coe," the finals of "Uno," and the doubles of "Starlight," one wonders that there is anything of the people left at all. Of course, the estimate we have made takes no account of possible winnings. But it is such a ridiculously moderate estimate that the winnings do not need to be counted. It seems to us more than probable that the *Star* is helping the bookmakers to much larger sums of money than those we have named. But even if we cut them down by half, or divide them by four, they are serious sums, and "the sophistry of recreants and the shibboleths of renegades" notwithstanding, we are inclined to the opinion that a newspaper which has part or lot in such a business should be very careful not to boast of its benevolence towards the people. The fact that other papers besides the *Star* are engaged in the betting business will not excuse our Stonecutter Street philanthropist; especially as the other papers do not swagger about their high principles, and make no profession to be engaged in journalism for any other purpose than money-making. There can be no question in the world that for a journal intimately concerned with betting to asseverate that it has at heart the best interests of the working man and the "family circle" is so much arrant cant. And if you find a paper canting brazenly you should beware of it. We do not in the least imagine that the *Star* will cease to traffic in selections or tips and doubles, and kindred lures for the poor man of its love; of course, if it did, it would probably cease to exist. But we do hope that before its twenty-second birthday comes round it will have learnt the wisdom of singing small where matters of public morality and public principle are concerned. The fact is that the *Star* is simply a newspaper, and a newspaper of the inferior tip-giving order, which has really little or nothing to do with journalism in its proper sense. The people engaged in its production or concerned in its profits are, to all intents and purposes, just as dependent on racing for their living and their profits as the next bookmaker; and they are no more entitled to brag about their good works, or their deep feeling for the working people of this country than has the keeper of a betting shop, or the furtive penciller, who is compelled by the law to do his business in dark passages and blind alleys.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR is evidently determined to turn a reasonably honest penny where'er he can. In the current issue of *T. P.'s Weekly* he treats us to the following profound remarks:

> Education is becoming more and more the chief weapon both of individual and national progress and success. And in nearly every home in England to-day there are young minds eager to equip themselves with all that knowledge can supply. Very many of them embark upon the task of self-culture on their own account, without seeking outside assistance, only to find that it is beset with pitfalls. Some of these aspirants, knowing my profound love of education, especially of the young, and learning through this journal to take an intelligent interest in literature, have appealed to me to help them in this same work of self-culture.

And, of course, Mr. O'Connor is willing to oblige. In connection with his journal he has consequently arranged "to found and conduct a Correspondence College, the objects of which will be to give the students who join it such instruction, direction and guidance as will open up to them the golden portal of the Temple of Learning in the *shortest space of time*, with the least difficulty, with the most rapid results"—and no doubt on the lowest terms.

Mr. O'Connor is of opinion that "self-culture unguided or misguided is almost as futile as the absence of the attempt to gain a taste for culture at all." This is a trifle cryptic, but if it means anything it serves to indicate Mr. O'Connor's wonderful lack of qualification for the duties he would fain take upon himself. Self-culture is a cheap and ugly phrase. The people who use it are not cultivated people, being rather "snobs," whose snobbery runs to a profession of tenderness for letters. However, it seems that Mr. O'Connor's "courses" of self-culture are to include Literary Training, Mental Training, Business Training, and French. Mr. O'Connor may be an expert in mental training, an acute man of business and an accomplished French scholar. Whether he is qualified to instruct "students" in the slightly more important department of literature is open to question; and, indeed, if we are to judge from his already existing "Literary Help Column" he is one of the last men in the world who should engage in the task. We believe that, so far as literary and mental training are concerned, any person who happens to have an inclination in these directions may easily accomplish for himself as much as Mr. T. P. O'Connor is likely to do for him, and probably a great deal more, without the outlay of a single shilling in the way of advice. "The golden portal of the Temple of Learning" is absolutely and yawningly wide open for everybody who possesses so much as a hornbook. If you wish to go through that desirable gate you will really go through it alone and unattended and you may take it from us that the hiring of an Irish journalist to put his shoulder to your back is not in the least likely to hasten your passage. We will go more deeply into this matter next week.

Mr. Bottomley has taken our advice. After a display of coyness which is probably without parallel in the history of misfortune, he paid his fine of three hundred pounds, and thus prevented himself from going to prison. We are of opinion that in this particular he acted most sensibly. But before paying, Mr. Bottomley talked somewhat. Mr. Justice Bigham had not been explicit, it seems, and Mr. Bottomley failed to comprehend the exact intention of his Lordship's order with regard to the fine and writ of attachment. Of course, Mr. Bottomley is nothing if not explicit, and he possesses an intellect so massive that one is disposed to tremble at the bare thought of it. The King's judges, however, have not yet learnt to tremble, even in the presence of Mr. Bottomley. Then it seems that in the matter of this Contempt, Mr. Bottomley has friends whose sympathy for people who slander the King's justice is so keen that they offered to pay three hundred pounds by way of expressing their feelings. Mr. Bottomley and his secretary very properly refrained from giving us the names of these gentry, though two of them are stated to be Members of Parliament. Until we have their names we shall indulge our own opinion as to their wisdom, let alone their ability to pay. Meanwhile, Mr. Bottomley is well out of a difficult situation, and by this time he will no doubt have learnt the salutary lesson that there are powers in England which are not to be defied even by Mr. Bottomley with *John Bull* at his back. The affair generally will doubtless be of great help to Mr. Vivian's promised "character sketch" of Horatio.

It seems that Mr. H. W. Lucy, of *Punch*, did have a reply for Mr. Beaven after all; we print it herewith:

> Dear Mr. Beaven,—Had I guessed that behind the signature, "Alfred B. Braun," attached to the letter in the *Liverpool Daily Post*, lurked my old friend and correspondent, assailing me from Preston—is it 20 years ago?—I, being a busy man, would have taken no notice of the renewed pleasantry.
>
> Being "translated," as Bottom puts it, to Leamington, there is, I find, from the letter to the *Standard* you kindly enclose, no change in his method or manner. There is the same inclination to attribute base motive, the same turbulence of expression.
>
> This last leads to lack of lucidity. I assure you it was only on reading your correspondence a second time that I perceived its point. At first I thought, as most casual readers will, that you were concerned to deny that Mr. Gladstone ever told me the story related in *Cornhill*. On second reading, I find that what all the pother is about is that, inadvertently, I have written "Conservative" where "Liberal" should have been printed. That was due either to a slip of memory or a slip of the pen, made at the time of the original record, and innocently repeated.
>
> I thank you for the correction, which shall be noted when the articles are printed in book form. In return for the service, will you allow me, in sincere friendliness, to call your attention to the constitutional habit, possibly increasing with growing years, of imputing evil motive and indulging in blustering rebuke? These ways ill befit a man of your cloth. They should be wrestled with in prayer.
>
> Yours faithfully,
>
> HENRY W. LUCY.
>
> Whitethorn, Hythe, Kent, Jan. 11.

Really, therefore, Mr. Lucy is one of those silken, sad, uncertain, rustling persons who by inadvertence say "aye" when they mean "no" and "chalk" when they mean "cheese." On a jury, by quite an innocent slip of the tongue, Mr. Lucy might say "guilty" when he meant "not guilty." And if he were going to be married he might say "I won't" when he meant "I will." So much for inadvertence. On the whole, we are inclined to think that Mr. Lucy's memory has probably failed him altogether, and that he really wrote "Conservative" and not "Liberal" at all. The person who made the inadvertence was the printer. The printer printed "Braun" for "Beaven." We have known him print "magpie" for "Maggie" and "shins" for "sins." "Conservative" for "Liberal" would be nothing to him. When Mr. Lucy publishes his "History" in book form we should advise him to sit up all night with the printer. And even then he may not be right.

REVIEWS

CYPRUS

My Experiences of Cyprus. By BASIL STEWART. (Routledge, 6s.)

CYPRUS, even in these days of rapid transit and tourist-explorers, remains fairly difficult of access, and doubtless to its out-of-the-way position and its lack of a frequent steamer service, we owe the fact that in many respects it has not changed much since the time when St. Paul "sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary." Paphos, where Elymas the sorcerer was deprived of his sight, is in ruins, though still inhabited by a dozen or so of families; but the processes of agriculture, the methods (or want of methods) of the people, their general indifference to enterprise, seem rooted in ages past. The character of a race does not alter with a fresh Government, and, considering the terms of the treaty of 1878 between England and Turkey, the way in which those terms have been set aside by the latter, the trying climate, and the primitive means of internal communication, this island jewel in the British Crown shines with a very dubious lustre. Our authority there does not appear to be particularly stringent. At a concert in the town of Limasol our National Anthem was printed at the foot of the programme, but, the Levantine Greek predominating among the audience, the Greek anthem was substituted. This peculiar human blend of Europe and Asia, the Levantine Greek, outnumbers the native population, it seems, and Mr. Stewart gives us some curious glimpses of the customs of town and country:

> The Greek portion of the community in the large towns, who consider it the "thing" to copy European dress, generally forsake the picturesque native costume for Whitechapel slops, and their women-folk look perfect frights in awful native versions of Paris fashions of ten or fifteen years ago, though I am glad to say that this craze for aping European customs and manners is at present confined to the larger coast towns, and there only among a certain class, middlemen and shopkeepers, and in the more remote villages in the interior of the island the natives are unspoilt, and hardly changed from their earliest ancestors in their mode of living.
>
> To realise this, one has only to go out into the Messaoria and watch the ploughing. Their ploughs are nothing more than a stick with an iron shoe to it, which doesn't do more than scratch the surface of the soil, and in consequence does not root up the thistles and bulbous weeds which thickly cover the ground, drawn by a couple of oxen, or sometimes a donkey and an ox. They cut the corn with a sickle, thresh it with a board studded with flints underneath, drawn by oxen over the corn, on which sits or stands the driver. . . . The grain and straw is pitched up into the air with wooden shovels, when the wind carries off the straw further than the grain, and so separates them. . . . In fact, I don't suppose Abraham, or even Adam, prepared his daily bread, from sowing the seed to baking, any differently than these Cypriots do at the present day.

The above passages, interesting in themselves, exhibit rather painfully the fact that the author's phrasing and composition leave much to be desired; in parts they are simply wretched. We have no wish to be severe on one who has given us a capital book of travel and dealt very capably with the political and commercial side of an important question, but we are bound to remark that a little more care in the writing would have added greatly to the pleasure of the reader; especially does this refer to the first half of the volume.

The state of affairs which prevents Cyprus from rising to a prosperous and popular country is illustrated in many anecdotes and asides; one example must suffice, bearing on the exportation of salt from Lake Akrotiri:

> The salt from a lake of this size was a very valuable asset to the island before we took over the management of affairs from Turkey, and would be so still were it not for that peculiar lack of foresight and acumen which distinguished the Government of Great Britain in concluding the treaty, not only in this clause, but in all of them, by which we promised not to export it in competition with other salt lakes of their own on the mainland. To make assurance doubly sure, the wily Turk immediately clapped on a prohibitive duty on salt imported into the Turkish Empire.

On the subject of the ruins which abound almost everywhere, Mr. Stewart is most interesting; his comments are by no means those of the chance visitor—they betray a considerable amount of painstaking research. He includes an admirably condensed account of the principal churches that still remain, their history and their vicissitudes by earthquake, flood, and pillage, and the book in its revised and enlarged form is a valuable contribution to the scanty literature concerning a corner of our colonies which to the average person is practically unknown. The fifty photographs which intersperse the letterpress are excellent; but that there should be no map is an unfortunate omission which it would be well to remedy in a future edition; even the sketchiest delineation of the island would have been useful for reference. We may conclude, by way of indicating that the author has a turn for the humorous side of things, by quoting a good story which bears on Turkish naval matters:

> A former Governor of Beyrout had occasion to be transferred to Tripoli, forty-four miles farther up the Syrian coast. The Sultan, wishing that the Governor should travel in a state worthy of his high position, ordered him to be conveyed in a Turkish man-of-war. The only available ship of the Turkish Navy in Beyrout Harbour at the time was a somewhat antiquated and dilapidated torpedo-boat. The Governor, being wise in his own generation, and doubting its seaworthiness, as it had probably not moved from its moorings for several years, refused to trust his life to such a frail shell, and elected instead to go as a passenger in a steamer of the Princess Line which happened to be sailing for Tripoli. However, to give a certain amount of dignity to the journey of so illustrious a personage, the torpedo-boat was deputed to act as convoy.
>
> The captain of the Prince boat, wishing to do a quick passage, and being also a bit of a humorist, urged his boat at her best speed, about 10½ knots. When they had proceeded a couple of miles or so, the torpedo-boat had already fallen nearly a quarter of a mile astern, and despairing of ever reaching Tripoli even within sight of her charge, ignominiously blew up, killing and drowning all on board. This, of course, led to enquiries from Constantinople, and the only available gunboat in Beyrout was requisitioned to carry despatches reporting the details of the accident to headquarters. This gunboat was an old paddle-steamer which had been laid up in harbour for three years or more. To signalise the departure of a Turkish man-of-war on an errand of such importance, the captain, dressed in his best, and marching up and down the bridge with his drawn sword over his shoulder, ordered the only gun to be fired. The gun, however, refused to be fired, even when red-hot cinders had been rammed down it. So the captain, finding this part of the entertainment did not come up to his expectations, rang up the engine-room to full speed ahead. Yet again was there disappointment; the engines gave a feeble half-turn and then stuck. It was three months before that gunboat left Beyrout, but whether she ever reached Constantinople or not history does not relate.

Young Turkey, of course, will improve on all this.

THE RELIGION OF THE COMMON MAN.

The Religion of the Common Man. By SIR HENRY WRIXON, K.C. (Macmillan and Co., 3s. net.)

THERE are some good books which need recommendation. This is one, otherwise it would miss the effect which it deserves. It has more merit than attraction, and its title does not give a very true idea of its aim. It suggests that Sir Henry Wrixon is offering a religion suitable for the ordinary individual; he really does nothing so useless. In the first place, by "the Common Man" he means thoughtful and intelligent persons, without time or perhaps inclination to make a

special study of religions; and in the second, he writes of no specific form of religious belief, but of Religion in contradistinction to Materialism. His book might rather be described as a short review of the reasons for believing in a personal God, which appeal to persons who have not made a special study of the subject. He also writes with much more than his "Common Man's" knowledge of how the subject has been treated before, while he expresses that person's range of view ably and accurately. The book may be read in an hour, and is written in simple language without the use of theological, philosophical and metaphysical terms. It is particularly adapted for public libraries, or libraries of religious institutions of all varieties, for it could not offend those who already believe in God more definitely than Sir Henry pretends to treat of Him, and is likely to suggest grounds for belief where none yet exists, or where it has been lost.

The best chapters are those in which it is argued that Religion, far from dying out, is as great a force in the world as it ever was; those which review its force in the past; and especially the chapters devoted to the craving for Deity within the human breast, and to the evidence to be found for it in an impulse within us, whether that be called "the voice of God the Holy Spirit," "Conscience," or "the Categorical Imperative." Sir Henry says little that is new, but novelty is not his object, he sets forth clearly the old grounds of belief. His quotations are of themselves valuable in a small book, they are well chosen, often of great beauty, are derived from authors unexpected by "the Common Man." "The heart is the home of God" is a phrase from a Japanese writer worth remembering. The daily prayer of a Wat Ja negress will find popular appreciation beyond that of "the Common Man" only: "O God, I know Thee not, but Thou knowest me—I need Thy help."

The objective evidence of the being of God—the signs of design in the material universe—is very adequately treated, but the evidence in itself is never so convincing as the subjective evidence. Sir Henry is less successful in establishing the beneficence of the designer, weakest when he deals with the thorniest section of his subject, "Whence the evil?" His arguments never claim to be conclusive, but here they are not always logical. Nevertheless, they are offered with such complete sincerity that their ineffacacy does not weaken his main thesis, and they provide incidentally contributory detail.

Again, in a very good chapter on "Belief" Sir Henry points out well that the belief in a personal God, founded on reason, is as well founded as the belief of science in the "ultimate secrets of nature"; secrets, as Hume says, surrounded with "that obscurity in which they ever did, and ever will, remain"; "facts which," as Sir Henry says, "are incomprehensible to us, but which, nevertheless, we believe to exist." In the instances of the distance of the fixed stars, of the rotation of electrons, and of electric oscillations, he gives excellent examples of "the fundamental postulates of every science," which are "incomprehensible and appalling to us." Similarly, the experience of those high saints who have drawn nearest to the divine Mind are no more incomprehensible and appalling to the students of natural science.

Exception may be taken to occasional references in the course of the book, but they do not effect the course of the argument, and need not be specified in a generally sympathetic notice. Of the more definite forms of Sir Henry's personal belief there is no trace, unless they be indicated by a tendency to exaggerate the importance of Judaism in Christianity; this is a habit now common among professors of its less dogmatic forms. The fact that Sir Henry does not define religion further for once serves to widen the appeal of the book and increases its usefulness.

THE PLATITUDINARIAN

Every Man a King. By ORISON SWETT MARDEN. (Rider and Son, Ltd., 3s. 6d.).

THIS is one of a peculiar type of semi-religious, sententious treatise which has sprung up of recent years under the *ægis* of the "New Thought" movement in America; and, as do all his colleagues, the author suffers with a superb sense of his message to mankind that renders him portentous and exasperating, in spite of his benevolent desires on our behalf. He would have every man an optimist—a perfectly legitimate and laudable notion; but we find it rather difficult to take life cheerfully after reading the exposition of his method. In fact, we incline to the opinion that the average unregenerated man had better pick up a frankly funny book after his day's labour is over, and steal a march upon dull care in that way, than endeavour to follow out the ethical labyrinths so laboriously constructed by Mr. O. S. Marden. Some of the chapter-headings project a chilly shudder to begin with: "Steering Thought Prevents Life Wrecks"; "Our Worst Enemy is Fear"; "Killing Emotions"; "Mastering our Moods"; "Negative Creeds Paralyse"; "Affirmation Creates Power"; "Don't Let the Years Count"; and so on. There are twenty-one of them, a doughty company, and we were heartily pleased when we waded safely to shore through the pellucid platitudes of the last. For the author is as adept at platitude as Tupper. Let us listen to the ripples for a moment:

> No one ever looked for trouble yet without finding plenty of it. This is because one can make trouble of anything if the mind is set that way.
>
> We all like sunshiny, bright, cheerful, hopeful people; nobody likes the grumbler, the fault-finder, the backbiter, the slanderer. . . . . It is just as easy to go through life looking for the good and beautiful, instead of the ugly; for the noble instead of the ignoble; for the bright and cheerful instead of the dark and gloomy; the hopeful instead of the despairing; to see the bright side instead of the dark side. To set your face always toward the sunlight is just as easy as to see always the shadows, etc.
>
> The world is too full of sadness and sorrow, misery and sickness; it needs more sunshine; it needs cheerful lives which radiate gladness; it needs encouragers who shall lift and not bear down; who shall encourage, not discourage. . . . Oh, what riches live in a sunny soul! What a blessed heritage is a sunny nature, able to fling out sunshine wherever it goes, able to scatter the shadows and to lighten sorrow-laden hearts, etc.

Whatever the world needs, it doesn't need this sort of twaddle, and it is rather hopeless to find that such an invertebrate repetition of what everybody has heard a thousand times can pass into print in the form of a reputable book. Where does the "New Thought" come in? There are other sentences, however, the perusal of which suggests in blank astonishment the question as to whether or not they could have been penned seriously. For example:

> You must feel that proper control of your own thoughts will cause all good things to come naturally to you, just as all bad things will be your portion if you misuse your God-given powers.
>
> In setting about the overcoming of fear, we must first understand what it is we fear. It is always something that has not yet happened—that is, it is non-existent. Trouble is an imaginary something that we think of, and which frightens us with its possibility.
>
> Under no circumstances can the worrying be justified by the situation at any particular time. Its object is always an imaginary situation of the future. . . . All fear resolves itself into fear of death.

The least experienced student of life could flatly deny these didactic statements, we fancy; but it would hardly be worth the trouble.

Pretty little stories, in illustration of the author's

"points," deck this desert like waterless oases, and one poem which is inserted to decorate the indubitably new thought that we may all remain young until the curtain falls is such a gem that we feel compelled to pass it on to our readers:

> Never grow old. Time's furrowed lines
> Of pain, of sorrow, and of tears
> Must leave their impress, wide and deep,
> On the face of declining years.
>
> But the gentle spirit, fraught with love—
> Bright deeds of happiness unfold;
> Grows brighter, lovelier with age—
> More winsome still—grows never old.

The poet's name we forbear to give; but we could wish to see what he would make of a sonnet.

Taken as a whole, the book is a warning against the danger of indiscriminate generalisation. A little study of the science of logic might have saved the author many a trip; but to generalise is so easy and so specious; it looks so incontrovertible to the uninitiated, and conveys such an impression of rectitude, that the writer with views to enforce frequently falls a victim to its allurements. For the last time, we will illustrate from the text before us:

> Go into almost any gathering, no matter how happy and gay the crowds seem to be, you will find, if you question one of even the gayest, that the canker-worm of fear gnaws at the heart in some form.
>
> The things which turn hair grey and plough fair faces with cruel furrows, which rob the step of elasticity, and take the buoyancy from life are bridges that never were crossed, misfortunes that never came.
>
> Some people spend most of their time in hunting themselves over for some new ailment, and when they have found it they are the most happy that they ever are *(sic)*.
>
> Harmony, health, beauty, success—these are the realities; their opposites are only the absence of the real.

This last is a delightfully easy argument to refute, since to reverse its terms is to demonstrate precisely the antagonistic condition.

We suppose there are dear people who read this sort of immature philosophy, imagine it "deep," and think with a glow of satisfaction of their intellectual temerity in tackling an author so poignant and original; who will take his reiterated advice, "Affirm that you are one of the most fortunate beings," and watch for the sequent good fortune. No amount of affirmation will convince us how fortunate we are after reading this book. Shorn of its tinsel and padding, it resolves itself mainly into an announcement of axiomatic truths which most sane persons hold from childhood: that a cheerful man gets on better than a morose one; that worry is unhealthy; that by indulging morbid fancies as to disease one becomes predisposed to "catch" any illness that happens to be about; that energy accomplishes more than lassitude; and so on. Go to, Mr. Marden, go to, and if you must write, give us something less flabby. Turn we to a page of "Elia" for reparation and comfort. . . . Is it chance, that we open on "The Sanity of True Genius"?

SHORTER REVIEWS

The Sunburnt South. By FRANCIS CAREY SLATER. (Digby, Long and Co., 3s. 6d.)

THIS little collection of South African stories does not call for any lengthy criticism. It has no particularly strong interest, but the narratives ring true, and are carefully written. We gather that this is the author's first venture in prose, and we would warn him, firstly, against a tendency to moralise and get off the track; his central ideas (they are hardly sufficiently elaborate to be termed plots) are slight, and any digressions in the way of didacticism can but weaken that which is already none too strong. Secondly, the use of the hackneyed phrase is a pitfall he should avoid. A sentence such as the following: "After meditating upon the tranquil beauty of this scene, and envying those whose lines had fallen in such pleasant places, I coaxed my jaded steed into motion and made for the farmstead," is a fault; there are plenty of synonyms in the English language by which "tranquil beauty" and "jaded steeds" can be furbished up into something less painfully familiar. The longest story in the book, "Magic Casements," at its latter part comes perilously near the pretty-pretty, homely-pathetic style dear to readers of penny novelettes; the kind of thing which is sometimes expressively called "soft." The first one, on the other hand, "Lena of Lion Kloof," is a clever and powerful little study. For the rest, they will give many readers, we doubt not, a gentle, unruffled hour of pleasant, arm-chair exploration in the land of Boers and Kaffirs.

The Isle of Lies. By M. P. SHIEL. (T. Werner Laurie, 6s.)

BEWILDERMENT, not unmixed with resentment, is an unequivocal description of our feelings upon turning the last page of this extraordinary book, for a more incoherent, improbable, fantastic story it would be difficult to conceive. It opens well; the adventures of Dr. Lepsius at the Abyssinian monastery are capitally related, and his escape with the mysterious trinket leads us to infer that we are on the edge of something exceptionally fine in the way of romance. But the good time never comes. The deciphering of the inscription on this stolen trinket, which we were induced to believe was to form the central idea of the book, seems to be completely lost sight of; the old Doctor, who marries, retires to a lonely island of the Outer Hebrides, and trains his son with the sole purpose of reading it, is relegated to a trivial position in the plot; and the remainder of the narrative deals with the affairs of this amazing son of his, Hannibal Lepsius. It trails off, in fact, to a very dreary account of third-rate intrigue and conjuring tricks on the part of Hannibal, and not a single character is seemly or life-like. We will quote a specimen of the appalling nonsense that the hero talks, and have done:

> "Love is apparently an instinct of fate," Lepsius replied; "the lover prophesies in a kind of trance of triumphs to come. . . . . The line of your profile has a hint of hollowness to the eye, owing only to a most slight jutting of your chin's point, a nothing which has overjoyed me with emotions the most poignant, with a sense of brotherhood for you, with a sense of the earth from her furnace-birth to her furthest sunsets, when the sun shall shine much nigher her, and the moon loom hugely; and I have compared you with ages, and with the Lady in the Chair of Cassiopeia. Or, looking sideways at you with your legs crossed, I have been struck by the great prolongation of your thigh-bones—so great that you could hardly run on your toes and palms, as I and apes may, since your knee-caps would doubtless graze the ground—so evolved, patrician; and I have cried extravagantly that, at their greatest stretch, the very galaxy would find space and to spare 'twixt their gaping gateway—an extravagance merely in appearance, since it is in a trance-dream of graces great even to infinity in types fated to grow from you that I thus exclaim; it is my subconsciousness, nay, my consciousness somewhat, all bewildered with a blaze of the world-wonder, and how, darling, but in boundless words may the mortal heart blurt out a little that burden of the Eternal? . . . ."

There are several pages of this, and it is the sort of stuff he can turn on, at any moment, by way of making love. Admittedly, he is a crank, and his up-bringing has been peculiar, but he does not strike us as the kind of eccentric who makes for amusing reading. The whole story, after the first chapter, is chaotic and improbable to the last degree, unredeemed by any cleverness of plot or dialogue, and we cannot advise our readers to risk their time in its perusal.

Fatality. By G. G. CHATTERTON. (John Long, 6s.)

As may be inferred from the title, this is rather a sombre story, but the author has treated his subject with a sense of proportion that restrains him from unduly emphasising the darker tones, and, although the ending is sad, it is by no means hopeless. Some pleasing touches of humour, too, relieve the tension frequently; indeed, there is no heavy-handedness throughout the book. The principal situation is that of a woman, Lady Delacour, under suspicion of having poisoned her husband, who fears to marry her former lover lest the cloud overshadow the children yet unborn. She is wholly innocent, and at the trial there was not sufficient evidence to convict her or the nurse, who, with the dead man himself, formed the possible alternative; but the mystery remaining unsolved, she suffered the temporary ostracism of an unkindly world, and, naturally, the tortures of a sensitive mind. The events which follow her retirement to Cornwall are exceedingly well related, and the smug, self-satisfied vicar, who visits his brilliant new parishioner with a view to admonishment and gets severely admonished himself, is a character well and forcibly drawn:

Going his way, as he rounded a curve of the lane, he came face to face with Lady Delacour, halted, and introduced himself. So, Esterelle invited him to retrace his steps and come back to tea with her.

"It would be too bad that you should go away a second time without coming in," she said pleasantly. "We have been watching the tide rush in—we, meaning my dog and myself. Such waves every now and then! The foam splashed right over us!"

Mr. Kingdon gazed at her in astonishment. This was the woman whom he had noticed, shrouded in her long crape veil, glide quietly into church, as quietly glide out of it, and flit solitarily away when service was concluded. And now, as he came round the curve, she had been running—yes, running; encouraging the dog to jump at her by flapping his nose with her glove, and her bare hand sparkled with many rings. . . . Had she instead been taken unawares promenading staidly, wearing her widow's veil and bonnet, with ungloved hand, were that necessary, showing only a wedding-ring, she would have drawn nearer to his charity. . . . The room into which Esterelle lightly ushered him helped him in his sensations. . . . The pretty knick-knacks, the costly bibelots and pictures that Esterelle had transplanted from her boudoir in Grosvenor Square, had here an effect, unnoticed by her, that impressed the vicar as exotic; and again the vague uneasiness assailed him. He felt almost as if unawares he had stumbled on an ante-chamber of the Scarlet Woman herself.

The scene is much too lengthy to quote in full, but it is one of the best in the book. We think that the author would do well in future to avoid the use of so many "sentences," if such they may be termed, which lack a main verb, as, for example: "Unveiled, with wind-blown hair curling about her face, and speaking in the ringing tones of youth." This sort of writing should be very sparingly employed; it is meretricious, a trick much in favour with certain sensational scribblers, by which not many readers whose opinion is worth having are beguiled. Apart from this, the prose is good, the interest is strongly held, and, we are glad to be able to say, the book is marked by a restraint and delicacy which form no small portion of its attraction.

High Life in the Far East. By JAMES DALZIEL. (T. Fisher Unwin, 6s.)

A GOOD novel, like fair play, is a jewel, and the short story, being and professing to be but a single facet of the precious stone, should be brilliant enough to justify its existence. To our regret we know that not a few collections of short stories can hardly boast a respectably bright flash amongst them; it is therefore a pleasure to be able to praise Mr. James Dalziel's latest book. None of the fifteen clever little sketches could be omitted to advantage, and they all balance excellently in that each deals with some aspect of that mysterious, bewitching, many-coloured fantasy of Eastern waters, which is the very antithesis of our calm, grey, Northern sea-life. They are artistic, but not too obviously so; the great temptation of the average writer essaying this form of his art which seems so easy is to tell too much; these are free from that fault; suggestive, yet carried through with a regard for suitable picturesqueness of language and vividness of description that harmonises exactly with the *mise-en-scène*.

It is a vexatious and ungrateful thing to quote from a short story, as a rule, but we will allow ourselves to take a paragraph or two from the career of "Bos'n," the black retriever, for our readers' enjoyment; in doing so we neither reveal the principal heroic incident in which he was concerned nor spoil the story. Bos'n was well known all up and down the coast on the boats of a certain Company:

Only once was he known to board a craft other than those belonging to the Celestial Coasting Company, and on that occasion but little option was left him. His ship was timed to sail at daylight, and he arrived at the wharf at 6 a.m., meaning to make a "pier-head jump"—for Bos'n, like other of his shipmates, was not above indulging in a "fly-round" at Shanghai—to find the steamer already some distance from the wharf, and proceeding slowly down the river. . . . But as the channel became clearer, the ship slipped rapidly away from him, and when abreast of the Dock, he saw that the chase was hopeless, and decided to take a rest on a vessel moored conveniently in the fair-way.

So five minutes later Bos'n was standing on the deck of the United States cruiser *Monocracy*, the centre of an admiring crowd of man-o'war's men, who, with the elastic morality of the sailor, straightway decided to enrol him in the ship's company. . . . The crew clubbed together and had built for him a resplendent silver collar engraved with the ship's name, flanked by a curious fowl that represented the Chinese silversmith's idea of the Bird of Freedom, and a nondescript female of disreputable appearance that stood for the Goddess of Liberty, with the motto *E Pluribus Unam* to complete the circle. . . . What was the reason of his dissatisfaction will never be known; but one day when a steamer of the Celestial Company was passing there was a rush and a scuffle and a splash, and Bos'n and the American Eagle and the Goddess of Liberty, and the Many that became One and six yards of brass chain flashed through a gun-port as if they had been shot from a catapult. By and by a sampan came down the river and delivered a ragged brown paper parcel, which on being opened was found to contain the collar and chain, and a *chit* rather forcibly than elegantly worded enunciating some unkind ideas about dog-stealers in general, and intimating that if they wanted Bos'n they could blanky-blank well come and fetch him. . . .

Of his tragic end the remaining pages tell graphically. Our one complaint must be that too many of Mr. Dalziel's stories, though often treated with considerable humour, are on the sad side; in his next collection perhaps he will give us rather more of the laughter that is not extinguished by tragedy or darkened by broken love-idylls. We feel sure that he could do it, and do it well.

MORAR BHEANAICHTE

NOT far from the beaten track lies an enchanted region, known superficially, if at all, to the ordinary tourist. It is full of old-world lore, of legend and of superstition. Till yesterday the English tongue was hardly spoken within its boundaries. Most wonderful of all, in a country where theological controversy and the strife of sects have raged through long centuries, no breath of discord has crossed its encircling hills and seas. Still, as four centuries ago, the Ancient Faith holds undisputed sway and the Cross upon the mountain guards "Morar Bheanaichte," blessed Morar, where no Protestant ever preached; where the Peace of

God abides in minds untroubled by questioning or doubt.

We had wandered for days and nights through "Prince Charlie's Country." We had trodden the Dark Mile; had skirted Loch Arkaig, where the treasure lies buried; had drunk of the Well of the Seven Heads, by the shores of Loch Ness; had heard the deep tones that call to worship from the tower of S. Benedict's Abbey. And, when Compline was over in the dim lit church where cowled monks enter in solemn procession, we came out under the stars, resolved to seek again the regions of the West and find for ourselves if what we had heard were indeed true.

How the road winds it matters not. Every inch of it is haunted by memories of other years. Where in Moidart and Glenfinnan can you wander "for Charlie and his men?" Now a mansion where the kind, the clement, the gallant Prince of the '45 was an honoured guest; there the well by Kinlocheil that bears his name; here the tree in whose hollow trunk he hid while the red-coats searched; there the Tor-a-Phrionsa where he disembarked. But at length you reach the spot where the Royal Standard was raised on the green meadow at the head of long Loch Shiel.

Not far off from "the old, ancient house" of Kinloch-Moidart, where the Prince's Avenue can yet be visited, stands the statue of Charlie, still, as Andrew Lang puts it, gazing towards the throne. As you pass in the glory of an autumn morning, ere the sun has dried the dew, soft shadows flit along the hill-sides and the heather burns purple. The air is sweet with the scent of bog-myrtle. Turn for a moment and gaze back upon the great mountain mass of Ben Nevis. There, high on its rocky bosom lies a cross of snow, pointing to the region that never swerved. For it was at Loch Shiel that the tide of the Reformation broke, once for all, in futile foam. Up on the hill stands "the Church with the Open Door." You enter in to rest awhile in the holy calm. The spell falls; you have stepped back through the centuries.

> The stalls are vōid, the doors are wide,
> The tapers burning fair.

From the ever-open door, symbolical of so much, you see hill and loch shimmering in the heat. The monument fades into the haze like a dream, and in its place there floats the Standard of the Exiled King, with Tullibardine at its foot; and grouped round it, Clanranald and his men, their tartans waving, their bare blades glittering. The music of the pipes comes through the still air and is answered from the glen. It is Lochiel with his clan, and by his side Jenny Cameron with the White Cockade.

What though not a man of them knows a word of the Prince's speech? Thirteen hundred bonnets fly into the air. The Standard unfurls on the breeze. It is the 19th of August, 1745, and 163 years have slipped away!

But it is a far cry to Morar and the road grows rough and steep and deserted. No conveyance seems to come that way now. Loch Eilt lies in solitude; over Loch Ailort brood the peaks of Froshven and the Stac. Was it in the Wood of the Green Moss, where every boulder and tree trunk is clad in the fairy colour and the evening light throws strange, fantastic shadows, that the heir of Castle Tirrim, hiding from Allan-nan-Corc, encountered, on a day of days, a maiden with eyes mysterious as the twilight and a voice musical as the song of The Nameless Burn? The goats had strayed far among the rocks, where the Atlantic surges break at the edge of the forest. She only saw a goodly youth; he, a maid, fairer than the daughters of men. Not until the priest had given his blessing, did either guess that the son of the Chief of Castle Tirrim had wedded the daughter of that fierce Allan of the Sword who had murdered his father.

On, by the back of Keppoch, till at last, with Rum and Eigg and then Skye, outlined across the blue expanse, the sands of Morar, white as snow-drifts among the heather, tell their tale. Then you come to the translucent waters where, in the gloaming and in the dawn, Morag is seen swimming when a Macdonald or a Gillies is to pass.

"They will be saying strange things about Morag. No, I will not hef seen her myself; but my father did. It was just behind the island with the three peaks she was seen. Yes, indeed!"

And strange things they will tell you, those simple folk, if you can win their confidence, things not to be set down here, lest, hearing of them, they tell no more. Some have seen Morag as a seal-maiden; some, as a strange shapeless beast. It was Morag, too, that the Jacobite Minstrel named "the lad with the bloom of a lass" for whom so many went to their deaths—"Morag, the beautiful maiden with the hair of gold."

The breeze is redolent with the subtle odour of peat from the thatched cottages at the head of the sea-water loch. The Morar river dashes down the gorge. A fisher is casting a fly below the fall. The twilight deepens; but on the mountain outlined against the fading sky stands the Holy Symbol. We have achieved our goal. Compline has been said ere we reach the church on the shores of the fresh-water loch. The night deepens. The late-rising moon is in the sky and a single star shines radiantly beyond the cross upon the hill. Blessed Morar is wrapt in a mantle of repose.

MEETINGS OF SOCIETIES

ROYAL METEOROLOGICAL SOCIETY.

THE annual meeting of this Society was held on Wednesday evening, the 20th instant, at the Institution of Civil Engineers, Westminster, Dr. H. R. Mill, President, in the chair.

Dr. Mill devoted his presidential address to "Some Aims and Efforts of the Society in its Relation to the Public and to Meteorological Science." He pointed out that the Society is composed of Fellows whose interest in meteorology varies widely, and there is moderation in dividing the Fellows into no more than three orders: meteorologists, observers, and interested persons. Meteorologists have either voluntarily devoted much time to the scientific study of atmospheric phenomena or are professionally engaged in meteorological work; observers, while often well versed in meteorology, specialise in collecting data and preparing them for discussion; and persons interested are those—and they form the majority—who have neither the special training of a meteorologist nor the special aptitude or inclination of an observer, but are none the less convinced of the importance of the work which is being done by the other two orders, and willing to support it, eager to become acquainted with the results obtained, able to follow and appreciate and often to criticise very usefully the expositions which meteorologists and observers lay before the meetings. The public contains many interested persons of this class who do not belong to a meteorological society and are the less able, on that account, to understand what is going on in the air above them, but the great multitude of the public, which for convenience may be called the general public, consists of persons who are not interested either actually or potentially in the scientific study of atmospheric phenomena, but require stimulation and education before they can think rationally or speak intelligently about the weather. In deal-

ing with the subject matter of meteorology there are two extreme points of view held among meteorologists, which appeal to two opposite types of mind: these are the simply observational and the purely analytical; and it is one of the great advantages of a scientific society to bring representatives of the two types together and to encourage mutual toleration and understanding. After referring to the activity of the Society in the establishment of well-equipped and carefully-inspected stations, for accurate observations of meteorological phenomena, and to the work carried out by various special committees, the President proceeded to call attention to two lines of usefulness which lay open to the Society at the present time. One is the correction of the impulsive sensationalism and antiscientific spirit in meteorological matters of a certain section of the Press in this country, which no doubt faithfully reflects the somewhat muddled ideas of the general public; the other is the advance which has been made in meteorological science during the last few years and the new opportunities it brings. He then alluded to the popular errors which are current concerning published weather records, and the effect of these on the Meteorological Departments maintained by many municipalities. There seems to be an opinion that (1) sunshine is good; (2) rain is bad; (3) cold is bad; (4) dryness is good; (5) heat is good; and (6) to be above the local average in the "bad" elements or below it in the "good" is a disgrace never to be acknowledged if it is possible to deny it. So much is this the case that he had heard instances of reports being suppressed in order to obviate misconceptions, and of instruments being moved in order to obtain more agreeable records. He next stated that we now stand at a very important point in the history of meteorology, which bids fair to expand in interest and importance in the twentieth century as chemistry did in the nineteenth, and from the same cause increasing necessity of applying its principles to practical ends. The standpoint of the meteorologist to-day is different from that of ten or even of twenty years ago. Then the only department in which much general interest could be expected was climatology, the study of the average conditions of the atmosphere at different places. Much remains to be done in that department, but the main interest is being diverted from the study of the air four feet above the ground, on the study of which climatology has been based, to the vast expanse of the upper atmosphere miles above the abode of man. He believed that in a few years the "airy navies grappling in the central blue" will demand a far more exact knowledge than is now required of atmospheric circulation and the relation of wind to gradient; or the disturbing influence of insolation on pressure; on the nature and movements of atmospheric eddies and currents; and these things being of practical importance, it will become worth the while of wealthy people to find the means for studying them.

After Dr. Mill had been thanked for his address and for his services during the past year, Mr. H. Mellish was elected President, and Mr. F. Campbell Bayard and Commander F. W. Caborne, C.B., Secretaries for the ensuing year.

CORRESPONDENCE

CHAUCER AND MODERNITY

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—Dipping from time to time into Coleridge's "Table-Talk," one is struck not only by its modernity, but also by its incisive common sense. Coleridge's few plain rules for the reading of Chaucer are "not for himself," for he "cannot in the least allow any necessity for Chaucer's poetry being considered obsolete." He goes on to say, "Strike out those words which are now (considered) obsolete, and I will venture to say that I will replace every one of them by words still in use out of Chaucer himself."

Amongst words still in use would be included those expressive dialect words, mostly Saxon, which are identical in meaning, and possibly pronunciation, with Chaucer's use of them five hundred years ago. It is curious to reflect that provincialisms which are uncouth and without meaning beyond a very limited locality were current and even metropolitan English at that time. Of these may be instanced a few, such as the following:—*Neshe* (Yorkshire), tender, thin-skinned; *threpe* (Yorkshire), to call, to reiterate an opinion offensively; *ligge* (Yorkshire), to lie down; *lithe* (Yorkshire), to soften, to thicken a liquid; *hilled* (Derbyshire), hidden; *wick* (Yorkshire), quick, living; *nappe* (Yorkshire), sleep; *urchon*, hedgehog; *throstle*, thrush; *heron-sewe*, young heron (Yorkshire and Midlands); *span-newe*, or bran-new, quite new; *flitted*, removed, shifted. This word, which is used in the present tense in the Prayer Book version of the Psalms, "Thou tellest my flittings," is also in constant provincial use at that period of anxiety to both tenants and landlords, known as quarter-day. The county limitations are not, of course, arbitrary, but merely to indicate the extent of personal knowledge. It would take up too much space to give all these and other provincialisms, with the context, in Chaucer, and a few instances must suffice.

"Mordre is so wlatsom (loathsome) and abhominable
That (God) ne wol not suffre it *hylled* be."
—*The Nonnes Preestes Tale.*

"Sol gold is, and Luna silver we *threpe*."
—*The Chanones Yemannes Tale.*

"Thilke ground that beareth the wedes *wick*."
—*Troilus and Creseide.*

"But sir, ye lye, I tell ye *plat*."
—*The Romaunt of the Rose.*

This last word, which will be readily identified with its equivalent "flat," is used indifferently either way in heated conversation between rustics in many provincial localities.

There have been many attempts to modernise Chaucer, but none, it seems to me, sufficiently disinterested to present him without mutilation, or some infatuated show of improvement. The moderniser is never content to sink his own personality, and by the time he has done with him, there is precious little left of the beautiful simplicity of the original Chaucer. Dryden is the greatest offender of all. In fact, he is little better than a common thief who passes all his loot of Chaucerian chased gold through the thieves' kitchen and expands it into thinnest leaf gold before putting it on the market. What could exceed the audacious barbarity of his treatment of the "Wife of Bath's Tale"? Its exquisite prelude of twenty-five lines is expanded into fifty, to the utter dispersion of that key-note of Faery which catches the spirit-ear in this strain.

"In olde dayes of the king Artour,
Of which that Bretons speken gret honour,
All was this lond fulfilled of faerie;
The Elf-quene, with hire joly compagnie,
Danced ful oft in many a grene mede.
This was the old opinion as I rede;
I speke of many hundred yeres ago;
But now no man can see non elves mo."

Expanded and metamorphosed with variations and accretions it becomes Dryden pure and simple.

Pope is less expansive, and has the good taste to acknowledge his indebtedness to Chaucer; but all the same it is the voice of Pope that speaks. I think Wordsworth retains more of the tone and spirit of Chaucer than either and keeps nearer to the original diction, but it is not Chaucer. To give a story in modern language, say, from "The Canterbury Tales," is not reproducing Chaucer any more than "Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare" are Shakespeare.

The little penny prose book, in the series called "Books for the Bairns," containing Tales from Chaucer, has been read probably by thousands of children; but not one in a thousand read the original Chaucer, and, perhaps, not one in tens of thousands read him with the pleasure that induced Coleridge to say, "I take increasing delight in Chaucer." Furthermore, he suggests a method "of restoring so great a poet to his

ancient and most deserved popularity" which has the merit of common sense.

"Let a few plain rules be given for sounding the final *è* of syllables, and for expressing the termination of such words as *océan* and *nation* as dissyllables—or let the syllables to be sounded in such cases be marked by a competent metrist. This simple expedient would, with a very few trifling exceptions where the errors are inveterate, enable any reader to feel the perfect smoothness and harmony of Chaucer's verse." Who could have been more competent than Coleridge himself? But he didn't do it, and he would never have done it. His want of application and his own singing instincts were insuperable hindrances to the carrying out of the inspired dicta of his unpremeditated "Table Talk." The poet of "Christabel" and "Kubla Khan" and the divine fragments which ravish and disappoint the listening ear of time could never have put himself into harness of the "competent metrist" to achieve the task. His version, probably, would have been more poetically wide of the mark than either Dryden or Pope.

The question arises, is it possible to modernise Chaucer so that readers who are not students, and who would be impatient of a glossary, shall take increasing delight in the "morning star of song"? Can the spirit of the fourteenth century, with its pathos and humour, catch the ear and touch the heart of the twentieth century in the original voice which moved to tears and laughter the earlier century?

The Chaucerian authority and eminent philologist, Professor Skeat, has published portions of Chaucer in modernised versions, and even he has substituted his own diction frequently whilst endeavouring to convey the original sense, which seems to contradict Coleridge's assertion that there is no necessity for his poetry being considered obsolete. It is true, however, that those provincial words still in use, and identical with Saxon words used by Chaucer, are obsolete except in very limited localities. Though many, like *nesh, nap, lig, wick, flitting*, etc., have a wider acceptation, and might still be retained, as the very sound of them is often suggestive of their meaning.

It seems to me it would be possible to give a rendering of Chaucer by this means and by very occasional transposing, without either mutilation or substituting with a supposed improvement of diction, which is almost equivalent to sacrilege. This might involve the occasional halting of a line, and perhaps some loss of rhythm and rhyme. But it would be Chaucer, and not Dryden or Pope or another.

Take the beautiful unfolding of an English spring in the opening lines of the "Prologue," of which you and I feel the freshness and fragrance :—

"Whanne that April with his shoures sote
The droughte of March hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veine in swiche licour,
Of whiche vertue engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eke with his sote brethe
Enspired hath in every holt and hethe
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne,
And smale foules maken melodie,
That slepen alle night with open eye."

"When as that April with his showers sweet
The drought of March hath pierced to the root,
And bathèd every vein in such liquor,
Of which virtue engendred is the flower;
When Zephyrus eke with his sweet breath
Enspirèd hath in every holt and heath
The tender crops, and the young sun
Hath in the ram his half course run,
And little birds make melody,
That sleep all night with open eye."

This is all very simple, and to the lover of Chaucer such trifling alterations must appear supererogatory, and yet I have discovered that the average reader, who may revere the barbarities of Browning, is bored by the quaint terminations, and puzzled by the primitive Saxon for which he will not trouble to refer to a glossary. Tyrwhitt gives only about fifty "words and phrases not understood," and some of these, I believe, are still in use as provincialisms.

The prejudicial obsoleteness of diction is seldom more apparent than in the above opening to the "Prologue," which is less than a thin April mist scarcely veiling a distant coppice at dawn, but which disappears entirely as you approach it. Though occasionally, as aforesaid, destructive of rhyme and very occasionally of rhythm, yet I submit (with deference) that a literal rendering on this method preserves the tone and spirit of Chaucer himself. Compare in this manner the opening to "The Wife of Bath's Tale" with Dryden's version :—

"In olden days of the King Arthur
Of which that Bretons speak great honour
All was this land fulfilled of faerie
The elf-queen with her jolly company
Danced full oft in many a green mead
This was the old opinion as I read
I speak of many hundred years ago."

And now take Dryden's magniloquent expansion of the pure gold of these seven lines beaten out into sixteen :—

"In days of old, when Arthur filled the throne,
Whose acts and fame to foreign lands were blown;
The king of elfs and little fairy queen
Gambol'd on heaths, and danc'd on every green;
And where the jolly troop had led the round,
The grass unbidden rose, and mark'd the ground;
Nor darkling did they glance, the silver light
Of Phœbe serv'd to guide their steps aright,
And, with their tripping pleas'd, prolong the night.
Her beams they follow'd, where at full she play'd,
Nor longer than she shed her horns they stay'd,
From thence with airy flight to foreign lands convey'd,
Above the rest our Britain held they dear,
More solemnly they kept their sabbaths here,
And made more spacious rings and revel'd half the year.
I speak of ancient times."

Of the above passages, the original, with only the spelling modernised, is more modern in tone and conception than its elaborate paraphrase and will still be modern when Dryden is reckoned more obsolete than he is now. Chaucer's modernity is the modernity of all true poetry since the beginning of human history, which is itself inconceivably modern in the order of the universe. The apparent obsoleteness is, as we see, superficial. A fairly educated compositor, with a glossary at his elbow, might produce an edition of Chaucer that would be as readable to the lazy average reader as Shakespeare, or Coleridge, or Keats. The poet and scholar are not to be trusted; for neither can resist the temptation to show off at the risk of submerging Chaucer.

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And how completely he was submerged for a period, owing to the rapid efflorescence of the language which he "first with harmony informed," the writers of the seventeenth century attest. His praise was in every mouth; but it was the praise of one dead and buried. Waller, in his poem "Of English Verse," has a stanza which reads like his epitaph:

> "Chaucer his verse can only boast,
> The glory of his numbers lost!
> Years have defaced his matchless strain,
> And yet he did not sing in vain."

Dryden, too, sounds the note of praise, and calls him "a perpetual fountain of good sense," whilst he takes care to bury him in a gorgeous mausoleum which is to the honour and glory of the sculptor, and no more like Chaucer than Young's paraphrase of the Book of Job is like that beautiful Eastern epic. E. K.

SENTIMENTALITY.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—There is a tendency nowadays to lengthen words in order to enlarge their denotation. We are not content with speaking of a "temper," but must needs call it "temperament." Even so a visit becomes a "visitation," and the simple monosyllable "man" is hideously transformed into "humanity." But these are sad omens for the future, and unless something be done to curtail this devolution of language, we are like to find ourselves also on the downward path.

A conscious elongation of words is nevertheless infinitely superior to an unconscious extension of their meaning, a process which has taken place with regard to the hybrid word "sentiment." It was never, at its best, a word with a very lofty significance, but when used sparingly it did imply a certain manly and respectful attitude between a person and an idea, or even between two persons. The habitual ending to a French epistle, "*Recevez mes meilleurs sentiments,*" is not without its dignity, and is certainly restrained in its meaning. The gentleman who hung the Lord's Prayer above his bed, and said each night, "Them's my sentiments," employed the word quite legitimately, and doubtless received much edification thereby. But when "sentiment" becomes "sentimentality," we are faced with a very grave problem. Many people employ the word "sentiment" where they should employ "sentimentality," and this abuse is but a sign of the general decadence which is setting in throughout our country. If we recall certain of the outbursts made at the beginning or during the course of the South African War, we can see that this blight of sentimentality was already attacking the people at large, as evidenced by the Press. Over the lists of casualties there was exaggerated weeping and gnashing of teeth, not for the sake of the people who suffered by these losses, but because they served as a stimulus to the lower sentiments of the people at large.

This canker that has attacked our nation has reached its culmination in the timid and futile efforts of members of Parliament and others in authority to deal with the Woman's Suffrage question. Those in authority are absolutely afraid to treat them as they deserve, owing to the political capital that might be made out of it, and the indignation which would be evidenced throughout the baser organs of the Press. This sickly sentimentalism which now reigns pretends to attribute its lack of initiative to a spirit of justice in which both sides of the question must be discussed. Cowardice is called chivalry: blatant rowdyism is treated as a joke, and a horde of unrestrained viragos sweeps triumphantly through the streets of London. Not content with this evidence of moral cowardice, there have actually been some delicately-minded members of the House who have protested against the far too lenient treatment of these female hooligans.

It is not the time to discuss such a paltry question as giving the franchise to women. Woman is woman, and until methods of parthenogenesis obtain, she will remain an inferior creature to man. Women even who pay taxes have, in the majority of cases, inherited their money from male relatives, and should really consider themselves lucky to be allowed the undisturbed possession of it when there are so many men poor and unemployed. Moreover, it can be conclusively proved that in all history the predominance of woman has been concomitant with the dissolution of the State, and those who are wise will read the signs of the times.

Nor can we attribute this sentimentalism to anything else but a lack of education. The old public school system, which helped scholars and produced men, is dying out, to be superseded by a system which causes manliness to abort and fills our newspaper offices with a crew of half-fledged degenerates, who have no power of endurance, and have not suffered enough to make them understand the value of anything. Hence we have a Keir Hardie, whose career through our Empire is curiously punctuated by disturbances. Nothing but an absurd sentimentality would allow such an incompetent to meander through the country when we are on the eve of serious trouble in India, and a probable revolution in Egypt, to say nothing of the complications in the Balkans.

The country is being ruined by sentimentalism and futile advertisement. No sooner does a man die in the street than a swarm of reporters appear like flies or carrion, each eager to get "the story" for their ignoble publications. No sooner is a murderer arrested than columns appear describing his methods of life, "by one who knew him." However much we may desire to regard matters coolly, we cannot fail to recognise the deleterious effects of this unbridled sentimentality. Troubles are, unfortunately, an evil necessity under the existing conditions, but there is no need to magnify them in this loathsome manner.

We want a system that will produce men in the highest sense of the word, men whose sentiments are calm, honest, and restrained. We do not require this medley of hysterical men and women, whose god is advertisement, and whose mind is averse to any form of true patriotism.

We must clear our minds of sentimentality if there is to be any hope for the future. Woman is very well in her proper place—a judicious obscurity mitigated by the capture of a husband. Socialists who have coloured brethren will do well for the Kingdom of Heaven, where no distinction of colour is known, and morbid journalists and newspaper proprietors will find another sphere of usefulness; but in England we require a return to methods of sanity and sentiments worthy of a great nation. R. L. LESLIE.

A PHENOMENAL GENIUS.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—If Mr. Caleb Porter had shown a little more knowledge and fairness, and less prejudice and animus, his letter might have been convincing. He accuses me of "impertinence" in sending you a *réchauffé* of a letter of mine in *Vanity Fair* five years ago; with more truth he might have said it was an abstract of a long letter in the *Times* and an article in the *Artist* two years before. The letter was printed in the Victoria Memorial Number of the *Times*, which had "the largest circulation in the world" that day, and it brought me sympathetic encouragement from strangers in all parts of England, so my views are not so "extraordinary" as Mr. Porter would have your readers believe. As nothing was then done, and it is now proposed to do something to lessen the injustice to Martin, another plea to remove the stigma from ourselves was eminently called for. Nothing disgraces and belittles a nation so much as insensibility to the greatness of its sons; and I do not want it left for the foreigner to "discover" Martin, as the Germans claim to have discovered Shakespeare.

I said that Martin, in aiming at the sublime when his powers were failing, toppled over the perilous line; in one picture Mr. Porter makes me say he achieved the "ultra-ridiculous." Milton toppled over the perilous line when he made the angels use artillery in the war in Heaven; but "Paradise Lost" is a magnificent work despite such defects. So Martin's "Last Judgment" is marred by the flowing robes of the angels, which suggest crinolines, and by the saved rising through the trees, suggesting that they are roosting on the cedars. As I said in the *Artist:* "Despite these defects, it is a wonderful composition. Compare it with the utter chaos of Tintoretto's 'Paradise,' then say who but Martin could have ordered such a triune world into unity? The domes of the Celestial City soar like evening cumuli above the Great White Throne flanked by the four-and-twenty-Elders. Through the stratus dividing the upper and lower worlds, the Avenging Angel, thunder-clad, is descending upon the panic-stricken multitudes of evil-doers. The scarlet ladies, the grasping misers clutching their useless gold, and the faithless stewards of Church and State stand out from the warring myriads of maddened sinners, who extend in serried masses back into the immensity of night. On the other hand, we have a galaxy of the blest, a countless multitude extending in orderly array to the distant city, which is a dream of loveliness, a pearl city faintly incarnadined by the blood-red

sun as it sinks into the abyss. The art that could marshal such amazing masses of material is of a higher order than any we have experience of to-day."

That Martin should have been able to put such subjects with equal ease on a huge canvas or a tiny wood-block shows a range of power that artists will appreciate, although Mr. Porter boggles at it. Indeed, it is to artists I appeal to confirm my statements; and I challenge their judgment, as they can only make the reservations I have made, and say they do not like such art. But I simply hate Dante's "Inferno." At the same time I recognise the greatness of the work. As for Bulwer Lytton, I quoted him because he described Martin's works more eloquently than any other writer, and because I heartily endorse his statements; and with both pen and brush I have proved my right to speak.

As for my "misdirected energy," which Mr. Porter is so anxious that some "better voice" should protest against, that energy has been used to expose shams, insincerity, humbug, pretentious incompetence, and conscienceless criticism, and the amazing blindness that has mistaken decadence for progress. I have raised a vigorous protest against the mistaken and unpatriotic action of the Press in allowing a steady defamation of all that is best in our national art, in the interests of small decadent cliques and of dealers in Old Masters. This misdirected energy of the Press has depreciated modern art by millions of pounds in value, besides paralysing upward effort. But I not only exposed abuses; I traced them to their root-causes, showed the true inwardness of an unprecedented situation, and the way out. I showed the higher purpose of Art, which had been so strangely overlooked, and the need of a Higher Criticism, that should understand itself and Art, and the delicate and wearable nature of the faculties the critic works with, and to which Art is addressed. But I was only expressing the best thought of the time, others lacking the courage to run counter to the foolish fads and fashions of the day. What I said, and others thought, yesterday, people are beginning to say to-day, and everybody will be saying to-morrow. So Mr. Porter will look in vain for that "better voice" to stay my plea for justice.

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